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HOW TO... Calibrate your monitor

What do you do if the colours produced by your printer are different to those you see on your screen? **Rod Lawton** explains how you can use Adobe Gamma to adjust your set

Most monitors leave the factory with high brightness and contrast settings and a brilliant blue-white tone. However, this setup doesn't do a lot for accuracy when reproducing colours, so colours in a printout may not be the same hue as the colours you see onscreen. To correct this, you need to calibrate your monitor and assign a new colour profile, which is used to correct the display's colours. If you have Photoshop Elements or another Adobe product installed on your PC, you can calibrate your monitor for free using the Adobe Gamma control panel.

1 In Windows XP, you'll find Adobe Gamma in the Control Panel or on the Start menu. Alternatively, look in C:/Program Files/Common Files/Adobe/Calibration, and double-click on the .cpl file. Start with the Wizard mode. In the first step, choose a new profile name. Then set the monitor contrast to maximum and reduce the brightness so the central dark-grey square in the window is just visible.

2 Ignore the next step prompting you to identify your monitor's phosphors. However, the gamma correction step is important. If the View Single Gamma Only box is ticked, you'll see a single square with a slider. Move the slider to make the brightness of the

centre box the same as the striped surround. You'll find it helps if you squint. However, it's better to untick the box, so you can adjust the Red, Green and Blue gammas individually.

3 In the next step, you're asked to pick a hardware white point. You can choose a value from the drop-down menu. Alternatively, click the Measure button to judge the white point manually. You should train your eye to recognise the colour shifts. Keep your eye on the centre square and click repeatedly on the left-hand square. The centre square will get more and more blue until the left-hand square disappears. Click repeatedly on the right-hand square until it disappears, and the centre square will get warmer. Once you've trained your eye using this method, use the left and right-hand squares to adjust the middle square until it is a neutral grey, neither too warm nor too blue. To set this as your white point, click the middle square. To cancel the whole procedure, press Esc on your keyboard.

4 Go straight to the final screen. This has Before and After buttons so you can see what difference the calibration process has made. Usually, you can expect to see the screen go a little darker and a lot less blue. **ES**

